



FIREFIGHTER TAKES pictures of interior of Lethbridge family's home after it was destroyed yesterday. Two children died in the blaze.

Lethbridge herald

Lethbridge fire kills kids

By RAYMOND SMITH
Staff Writer

Fire ripped through a Lethbridge family's home yesterday killing two young children despite a heroic rescue bid by their teenage brother and father.

Another child was seriously injured in the blaze.

The drama began when a CP railway worker saw flames coming from a house on 15 St. at 2:08 a.m. and called the fire department.

Two children, Benjamin Scholten, 4, and his brother, Reimer, 8, were dead on arrival at St. Michael's Hospital, say police.

Another child, Diana, 12, is in serious condition.

Police say the fire completely destroyed the house doing about \$70,000 damage. No cause for the fire has been determined.

The parents Dirk, 52, and Hantzen Scholten, 44, escaped

with their other four children, Richard, 14, Evelyn, 10, and twins Dicky and Sipke, 11.

Dirk's shaken brother Roelof, 42, of Picture Butte, yesterday told the *Sun* of the tragedy.

He said Richard was awakened by an explosion and woke his parents and then tried to get the younger children out of an upstairs bedroom.

Roelof said: "At one point he had both Ben and Reimer in his arms, but when he got to the stairs, he could only manage to carry Ben.

"On the way down the stairs he was overcome by smoke and had to abandon Ben as well."

Meanwhile Dirk had covered himself with a blanket and was trying to rescue his other children.

"The house was filled with smoke and it was pitch-black darkness. Dirk crawled through the blackness calling his children's names," said Roelof.

Evelyn and the twins responded and were saved.

When Richard and Dirk finally made it outside into fresh air, Richard was so overcome with smoke he couldn't tell his father that Ben was lying on the stairs, said Roelof.

He said Dirk and his wife were "grieving terribly" yesterday.

"With God's help we'll get through this tragedy," he said. "But it'll be a sad Christmas."

Rollback offer bounced

By PETER MILLER
Staff Writer

Council last night withdrew its offer to city hall unions to save 750 jobs in return for wage rollbacks — on advice of its legal beagles.

But they'll still accept any voluntary rollbacks the unions make.

Council had offered to keep the 750 city staffers on the job if civic unions roll back their 1983 wage hikes from 13.4% to 7.5%.

Councillors did an about-face after getting legal advice from city hall lawyers about moves the

unions are considering to fight the city by having its rollback offer declared an illegal lockout.

Council refused to say what legal advice it received. Lawyers had advised council "the least said the better," Mayor Ralph Klein told reporters.

Just one week ago council offered to cancel 750 of 875 layoffs then set for Feb. 1 provided the unions roll back their wage hikes.

City union leaders who have opposed the roll back offer were relieved at council's move of dropping the rollback offer.

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